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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5389
INFO RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 8689

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 001018

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PLEASE PASS TO IO/RHS, DRL/MLGA, EUR/PGI, USUN NEW YORK,
AND US MISSION GENEVA. NEA/ARP FOR ROBERT JACHIM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNHRC](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: NO DECISION YET: HRC ELECTIONS REFTEL DEMARCHES
DELIVERED TO THE SAG

REF: A. A) STATE 063345
[B](#). B) STATE 64709
[C](#). C) STATE 058036

Classified By: Political Counselor David Rundell
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Reftel demarches were delivered by Ambassador Fraker to Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal on May 12 and on the working level by PolOff to First Secretary Abdulrahman al-Rassi on May 13. Additionally, a non-paper was delivered via dip note on May 7. Prince Saud told the Ambassador that he was unfamiliar with the upcoming Human Rights Council elections and was unsure about Saudi Arabia's relationship with Belarus. He added that he would consider voting for Slovenia and Bosnia, but first he had to look into the bilateral relationship between Saudi Arabia and Belarus. Al-Rassi also told PolOff that a final decision had not yet been made, but that the International Organizations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)-- which is responsible for advising the Minister on these issues-- recommended that Saudi Arabia votes for Bosnia and Slovenia.

[1](#)2. (C) Per reftel demarches Post coordinated with the British and French missions in Riyadh. The French Embassy confirmed that they are in support of voting against Belarus and utilizing the European Union and the group of francophone countries to push for this cause. They are not planning to demarche the Saudis in Riyadh. The British Embassy also confirmed that they are in support of voting against Belarus. However, they are negotiating with Saudi Arabia directly in London because the Saudis have asked for the British to vote for Saudi Arabia in the HRC elections. According to this contact, the British agreed to vote for Saudi Arabia in exchange for Saudi Arabia not voting for Belarus. Additionally, the Saudi MFA informed PolOff that the Canadian Embassy demarched them on May 14 with a similar message to ours-- namely to vote for Slovenia and Bosnia.
FRAKER